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Bug of the Month Knapweed Root Weevil



Diffuse and spotted knapweed are devastating invasive weeds and both hit by the knapweed root weevil *Cyphocleonus achates*.

This large and showy weevil emerges as an adult in mid summer and lays eggs at the bases of knapweed plants where the larvae can bore into the root system and develop during the fall and the following spring.

The developing larvae can open up the root system to attack by soil borne pathogens which may further weaken the plant. The adults would seem to be hard to miss in the field but they blend in very well with knapweed foliage and if disturbed they drop to the ground where they sit quietly, blending perfectly with the dried vegetation, stones and soil beneath the knapweed plants.

Adults are collected and redistributed by the Palisade Insectary in mid to late summer with most of the weevils coming from a cultivated knapweed "garden" next to the Insectary. Since this weevil feeds on roots it makes a great complement to the flower feeding weevil *Larinus minutus*, last month's Bug of the Month, since they can combine to take out seed production as well as existing root structures.